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14 April 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting With Representatives of COMPU-SCAN, Inc., 8 April 1971

1. The undersigned, with [] met with Messrs Davis and Steinberger of Compu-Scan, Inc., to discuss their evaluation of pending or potential file conversion projects using OCR technology. 25X1A

a. The Compu-Scan representatives were shown a sample of the Main Index microfilm and the "missing Backlog records" problem was explained. Their evaluation of the film itself is that it is a quality print. However, there are numerous instances of touching characters due (probably) to failure of the flexowriter to space properly when the card was originally typed. This caused one line to partially over-print the preceding line. There is no economic method by which the Compu-Scan OCR device can handle these touching characters. There is an additional problem with Backlog records reproduced by "scriptomatic" process. The original cards reproduced by this method are very fuzzy and the individual characters are often blurred or partially indistinct. In the opinion of the Compu-Scan representatives the scanner cannot read these cards. We do not have any estimate of the percentage of all Backlog records reproduced using the scriptomatic process. The conclusion of the meeting is that Compu-Scan can not provide any assistance to us on this conversion project. They suggested a manual retype of the Backlog records as the only economically feasible solution if we decide to reconstitute the file.

b. While here, Mr. Davis took the opportunity to present Compu-Scan's evaluation of the [] conversion project. Their evaluation of the project is that the microfilm file can be scanned but with only marginal accuracy in its present form. Their reasons are: 25X1A

1) Reduction ratio of the microfilm is well beyond the usual limit of the scanner;

2) The film density is too variable because the original hard copy was printed on a poorly adjusted impact printer; 25X1A

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- 3) The film is black on white rather than the usual white on black characters (although this is not an overwhelming obstacle).

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Because of the problems cited above which, however, are not technologically insoluble, they state their belief that "the most economical method of entering the data is by rekeying it." Thus they are, in effect, withdrawing from their previous proposal to convert this file using OCR technology.

2. We plan to pursue possible conversion alternatives for these two projects with other vendors of OCR services. In particular, it is my belief that Compu-Scan's basic orientation as a hardware manufacturer makes them reluctant to undertake "job shop" type conversions. They would much rather sell us the machine and let us try our luck on the conversion. And, although this is not stated explicitly, it is my opinion (bolstered by comments from their local representative) that they do not wish to become involved in any conversion project for classified materials. It is their opinion that the security requirements imposed upon the vendor make most such projects uneconomic for a company of their size and orientation.

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Distribution:

Original - Compu-Scan file (LAW)✓

- 1 - [redacted]
- 1 - ALR for file
- 1 - SG Chrono

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